

Sherry Posthumus - 9/24/45 - 12/3/07

Contributed by Craig Harkins
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Sherry Posthumus was Stanford's women's fencing coach and was team leader in the 1988, 1992, and 1996 Olympics. She passed away Monday afternoon at her home in San Jose after battling an inoperable brain tumor for the last two years.

Here is the tribute from her daughter:

It is altogether fitting that the sport of fencing played such a vital role in the life of Sherry Posthumus, who spent the bulk of her days touching the lives of others. As a wife, mother, daughter, sister, grandma, friend, teacher, and coach she shared her wry wit, her subtle wisdom, and her joy for life.

A mere list of her accomplishments – ample as that list may be – cannot begin to animate the person that she was and the impact that she had on those around her. Sherry's resume would note nearly 25 years in the athletic department at Stanford University, but no bullet point can illuminate the ever-open office door, the careers launched, the lives changed, and the scores upon scores of students who emerged from the university to take their first wobbly steps into adulthood covered with her fingerprints.

A vital, driving force in the fencing world Sherry represented the United States as the manager of three Olympic Teams. She helped shape the growth and development of the sport domestically and at an international level, built a highly competitive collegiate program at Stanford, and left a trail of new fencing clubs like footprints in her wake throughout her adult life, sharing the sport she loved with generations to come.

At home Sherry was the keystone of a bustling family. Behind her impish grin there was no trick too complex to play, no project too large to undertake. An ancient brown upright piano vanished overnight, reincarnated in black and white as perhaps the world's first music-making dairy cow, complete with head, tail and bell. A gourmet cook, a lover of tools, and an entrepreneur forever in search of next great idea, like the wildly popular Pirates Camp for kids that sprung from her mind, cutlass at the ready, engendered by the melding of fencing and sailing, neighbors along the Roble Gym hallway. The consummate host, Sherry was as generous with her home as she was with her spirit, the Hotel Posthumus hosting a steady stream of students, fencers, friends, and practical strangers for a night, a week, a month, or more. She never stopped giving.

It is perhaps the rarest of traits: the ability to make every single person you encounter better for having known you. And sadly, the number of people who can truthfully make that claim is less by one today.

Sherry died at 62 from brain cancer and is survived by her husband Donald, and two daughters and their husbands, Lisa and Danny Milgram and Jennifer Posthumus and Kris Atteberry, and by two grandsons, Nathan and Josh Milgram. She also is survived by her mother Betty Rose, and her sister and brother-in-law, Evie Rose and Jerry Barnhart.